

REMARKS

In reply to the Office Action of December 5, 2008, Applicants have amended claim 1 and added new claim 10. No claims have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-10 are pending, with claims 1 and 10 in independent form.

Claim 1 has been amended to cover deformable illumination modules where “each of the electrical power supply wires is a continuous wire that forms a single electrical contact to each of the plurality of circuit boards.” The amendment to claim 1 is supported by the original application at, for example: page 2, lines 3-13; page 4, lines 1-4; page 6, lines 4-9; and in the Figure.

Claim 10 has been added, and covers deformable illumination modules where “the two electrical power supply wires run along opposite edges of each of the circuit boards.” Support for the subject matter of claim 10 is found in claim 1 and in the original application at, for example: page 3, lines 9-11; page 5, line 22; and in the Figure.

Claims 1-6 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being unpatentable over Sloan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,932,495, “Sloan”). As amended, independent claim 1 covers deformable illumination modules where “each of the electrical power supply wires is a continuous wire that forms a single electrical contact to each of the plurality of circuit boards.” · Sloan does not disclose such modules, for at least the following reasons.

Sloan's channel lighting devices do not include continuous power supply wires that form electrical contacts to each of his circuit boards. Instead, in Sloan's devices, his power supply wires only connect adjacent circuit boards. For example, with reference to Figures 1 and 2 of Sloan, “[i]nput wires 28a, 28b are connected to the PCB 18 at connection points 32a, 32b” (Sloan, col. 4, lines 32-33), and “output wires 30a, 30b are connected at connection points 32c, 32d” (Sloan, col. 4, lines 33-34). Thus, Sloan makes clear that his input and output wires are not “continuous wire[s] that form[] a single electrical contact to each of the plurality of circuit boards” as amended claim 1 requires. To the contrary, in Sloan's devices, input wires and output wires only run between pairs of circuit boards. Further, the input wires and output wires are connected to one another across Sloan's PCB 18. That is, the input and output wires are not

continuous wires according to claim 1. In fact, input wires 28a and 28b terminate in a male connector 34 between Sloan's PCBs, and output wires 30a and 30b terminate in a female connector 36 between PCBs.

Sloan discloses other embodiments as well, but even in these, his input and output wires are not continuous as claim 1 requires. For example, in Figures 10 and 11 of Sloan, input wires 117a-b and output wires 118a-b do not terminate in connectors, but still apparently connect to terminals 119a-d on Sloan's PCB 114. That is, neither input wires 117a-b nor output wires 118a-b are "continuous wire[s] that form[] a single electrical contact to each of the plurality of circuit boards" as amended claim 1 requires.

Further, it would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, based on Sloan's disclosure, to replace his short input and output wires with the continuous wires recited by amended claim 1. Sloan states that his male and female connectors 34 and 36 "provide a reliable means of connecting the lighting units in a daisy chain ... 'Y' connectors or the like ... can be used to branch from the daisy chain to match the shape of the channel letter" (Sloan, col. 4, lines 40-43). In other words, by using internal connectors, Sloan's lighting devices can be configured in chains of a particular shape to match the shape of letters he wishes to illuminate. This design comports with the purpose of Sloan's devices, which is to function as "LED based lighting units for illuminating channel letters" (Sloan, col. 1, lines 12-13). Therefore, a person of ordinary skill in the art would find no reason to modify Sloan's devices to include continuous power supply wires; doing so would impair or even foreclose the configurability that is apparently a chief feature and purpose of Sloan's channel lighting system.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that amended claim 1 is patentable over Sloan, and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Each of claims 2-6 and 9 depends from claim 1, and is therefore patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of each of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as well.

Claims 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Sloan. The Action admits that Sloan does not disclose the subject matter of claims 7 and 8,

but alleges that the additional limitations of these claims would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art (Action at pages 3-4).

Applicants do not concede the Action's position with regard to the additional limitations of claims 7 and 8. Nonetheless, Applicants note that each of claims 7 and 8 depends from amended claim 1, which is patentable over Sloan as explained above. For at least the same reasons, and notwithstanding the Action's arguments regarding the additional limitations of claims 7 and 8, these claims are also patentable over Sloan for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

New independent claim 10 covers deformable illumination modules where "the two electrical power supply wires run along opposite edges of each of the circuit boards." Sloan does not disclose such devices. Instead, as best Applicants can determine, in both embodiments that include molded connectors (see, e.g., Sloan, Figures 1 and 2) and embodiments without molded connectors (see, e.g., Sloan, Figures 10 and 11), Sloan's power supply wires run together *underneath* his circuit boards, not along opposite edges of his circuit boards. Sloan states that his output wires in Figures 1-3 are "folded under the extrusion 20 and housed within the extrusion's bottom longitudinal cavity 40" (Sloan, col. 5, lines 13-15). Sloan's Figure 5 shows "bottom longitudinal cavity 40 for housing the output cables when they are folded under the extrusion 20" (Sloan, col. 5, lines 39-41). Figure 9 shows an extrusion 74 that does not include a bottom longitudinal cavity for housing output wires, but "the output wires 80a and 80b pass under the PCB through channels 88a, 88b" (Sloan, col. 6, lines 12-14). With regard to the embodiments shown in Figures 10 and 11, Sloan states that "[t]he output wires 118a, 118b pass under each unit's PCB through the extrusion channels and pass directly to the input connection points of the next unit in the chain" (Sloan, col. 6, lines 40-43). Thus, it appears that in each of Sloan's embodiments, his output wires pass *together underneath* his circuit boards, not on opposite sides of his circuit boards.

Moreover, a person of ordinary skill in the art would have found no reason to position Sloan's power supply wires on opposite sides of his circuit boards. In Sloan's devices, heat

dissipation elements such as fins are located on the sides of extrusions in which PCBs are positioned. Sloan states that the fins “help dissipate heat into the ambient by providing a larger surface to radiate the heat” (Sloan, col. 4, lines 31-32). By positioning power supply wires along the sides of Sloan’s extrusions, it is entirely conceivable that the wires would interfere with heat dissipation from Sloan’s PCBs. The heat might also conceivably damage the wires, leading to problems such as electrical shorts. Thus, given the construction of Sloan’s devices, a person of ordinary skill in the art would have had no reason to position electrical power supply wires on opposite edges of each of the circuit boards, as new claim 10 requires.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 10 is patentable over Sloan, and respectfully request that claim 10 be allowed.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants ask that the application be allowed.

Canceled claims, if any, have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Any circumstance in which Applicants have: (a) addressed certain comments of the Examiner does not mean that Applicants concede other comments of the Examiner; (b) made arguments for the patentability of some claims does not mean that there are not other good reasons for patentability of those claims and other claims; or (c) amended or canceled a claim does not mean that Applicants concede any of the Examiner's positions with respect to that claim or other claims.


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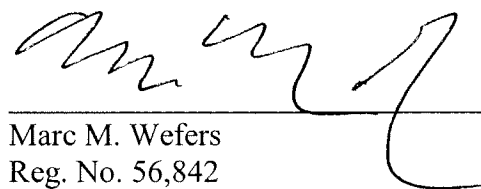
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Fees for the Petition for Extension of Time are being paid concurrently on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 12406-0214US1.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

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